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City Paramedics Return to Camp Gruber

Paramedics from the Broken Arrow Fire Department will take part in another of the Homeland Security exercises at Camp Gruber Monday and Tuesday, working with Special Operation Teams from several other communities.

Fire Chief Greg Neely said this week that the scenario involves an act of terrorism and subsequent school shooting, with multiple casualties.

"We are going to provide four Paramedics for the exercise on Monday and two for the Tuesday event," he continued. Neely added that other personnel might attend as observers, but only on off-duty days.

Camp Gruber has been the site of other major exercises over the past several months, and City employees continue to be a key part of those exercises. The scenarios are designed to give first responders from police, fire, sheriff and emergency operations teams to work with each other and learn during situations made as real as possible.

For Neely, the exercises have provided not only that experience for his personnel, but also have served to help him reach one of the goals he set when he came to Broken Arrow from Tulsa 19 months ago as Deputy Fire Chief. When Ron Osborn announced last year that he would retire at the end of this month, Neely was appointed interim fire chief.

"I wanted to do more than just run a good shop," he said. "I came here with the intentions of being part of something very special. One of my goals was to help develop and create a climate for the BAFD to become a regional leader in the fire service community.

"This membership has a tremendous amount of local pride, and a willingness to be a premier organization," he continued. "In addition to developing our own internal capacity and honing the skills of our own people, we also need to have an emphasis in reaching out to other departments. We are increasing our statewide and regional presence to build that reputation as a regional leader."

In addition to being key players in the Camp Gruber exercises, which draw emergency personnel from all over the state, Broken Arrow's Fire Department has also been acting as an agent for Oklahoma State University's Fire Service Training program. Neely points out that "we have provided promotional

examinations and/or promotional assessment centers for fire departments from Stillwater, Guthrie, Coweta and Ponca City.

“Having found success with the development of our own unique Fireground Accountability System, the BAFD has provided training in this system to multiple chief officers in the Green Country area, and recently delivered a more comprehensive course to the Coweta Fire Department.”

This added involvement has been particularly valuable at a time when funding for the OSU program has been cut back due to the concentration on Homeland Security exercises at Camp Gruber.

Neely explained that the BAFD had “played an integral role in crafting the language for the Oklahoma State Firefighters Association position paper on the fire services’ future role in Homeland Security issues. These recommendations were forwarded to Gov. Brad Henry in a proposed restructuring of the State Department of Homeland Security.”

Retirement Reception for Chief Osborn Set Jan. 30

A reception for Ron Osborn after more than 31 years service with the Broken Arrow Fire Department will be held at the City’s Community Center in Central Park Friday, Jan. 30, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Osborn served as Fire Chief for the City from July of 1997 through late last year, when he announced his retirement and then stepped down to Deputy Chief so that Greg Neely could move up to Interim Fire Chief.

His retirement will begin in February, while Neely will continue to serve as Fire Chief at least until a new City Manager is named.

Osborn began his career with the BAFD on Sept. 1, 1972, and was promoted to Driver in July of 1973. In 1975 he was promoted to Captain and then to Assistant Chief in 1979.

One amazing note is that in all that time he never took a day of sick leave.

In a special resolution made by the City Council at its Jan. 20 meeting, Osborn was praised for having “seen and brought about significant changes in both the City of Broken Arrow and its Fire Department by being a part of the management team that has overseen the ascension of the BAFD as a regional leader in the area of Advanced Emergency Medical Service, providing one of the finest pre-hospital care environments.”

The resolution also pointed out that “Chief Osborn has unselfishly contributed untold hours and resources to benefit the Community of Broken Arrow at-large, through his tireless work in multiple civic and church oriented functions and organizations, demonstrating the example of a true public servant.”

Traffic Specialist Unit Wins ‘Director’s Award’

Once again the Broken Arrow Police Department’s Traffic Specialist Unit has come home with an impressive honor, this time from the Traffic Safety Forum and Awards Luncheon sponsored by the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office.

The program was held in Midwest City, and was attended by Sgt. Ed Ferguson and Officer Tim Collins of the BAPDTSU.

In a memo to Police Chief Todd Wuestewald, Ferguson stated that the “award was presented to our agency for the innovative approach used to target a high-risk group of drivers through the Tiger TV program in 2003. The award was in recognition for the partnership developed between the Broken Arrow Police Department and the Broken Arrow Public Schools to reduce the number of traffic collisions involving our teen drivers.”

Ferguson emphasized that “this award would not have been possible without the assistance of the involved BATSU officers, Officer Tim Farlow and Crime Prevention Specialist Lisa Ford.” He also cited the efforts of Cindy Camp of the BAHS administration and the students involved in the program in 2003.

“Ms. Camp and her students devoted untold hours and resources to the reduction of teen impaired driving through the production of anti-drinking and driving video announcements, particularly during the period of the 2003 Senior High Prom. Additionally, Ms. Camp committed a number of hours of presentations regarding other traffic safety issues that were presented to the student body at the high school.

“In spite of the fact that both police and school resources are limited, this project has proven that our combined resources can have favorable results,” said Ferguson.

BAPD Comes in for Praise from Kiefer PD

Awards and praise for what they do and how they do it has become commonplace for members of the Broken Arrow Police Department. This past week, however, several members were cited for how they teach.

Chief Stacey S. White of the Kiefer Police Department wrote to BA Chief Todd Wuestewald to express the admiration for work done by City officers who helped teach a CLEET Basic Reserve Officer Academy currently running in that community.

In the letter, White states, “I had the privilege of working with a number of your officers and instructors and let me just say that I believe you have among you the best in the business – men and women who obviously shine individually, but function best as a team.

“I have been teaching law enforcement courses going on seven years now, and I must say that your personnel not only taught the students of Academy 03BR5-5, they helped mold them and in some cases even mentor them.”

Singled out for those words of praise were Capt. Carole Newell, Capt. Heath Arning, Sgt. Mark Irwin, Officers Tim Collins, Dee Henson, Gary Sipes, Barry Pickup, Kevin Hunsperger, Mike Golden, Amy Golden, Gary Brunz and Reserve Officer Chris Wyre.

“Captains Newell and Arning and their crews were extremely helpful to us all, and I wanted you to know just how much I appreciate them and you for making this academy one of my best yet,” said White.

